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ABSTRACT

A profile of the state of English and English instruction in New Zealand covers the following topics: a description of the role and status of English language use in industry and commerce, government, and education; the role of English at all levels of the educational system; the availability and training of teachers of English, the type of materials support available for instruction; educational administration in relation to English instruction, development and planning for the teaching of English; the type of and demand for English instruction outside the educational system; the level of British, American, and other agency support for English instruction; commercial opportunities and creative writing; and current research on English language and literature. It is concluded that with regard to the teaching of English, there is a tension between the search for a national identity and the strong attraction in the universities for traditional English studies. A search is under way for teaching and assessment techniques to encourage continued mastery of English as the main international language while making possible recognition of distinctive forms of New Zealand native expression within it. A short bibliography is also included. (MSE)

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ENGLISH TEACHING PROFILE

Country: New Zealand
Date: March 1985

1. ROLE AND STATUS OF ENGLISH

New Zealand is an English-speaking country which has begun to see itself as a member of the South Pacific nations.

The proportion of people in NZ using English as a second language (ESL) has been variously estimated as 5 per cent or 8 per cent but could be higher; 12.1 per cent of the population is classified as Maori, though not all may be Maori-speakers. There has been an upsurge of interest in Maoritanga (Maori beliefs and lifestyle) and the Maori language. This has resulted in a climate of opinion which favours the retention of Maori and Maoritanga for Maori people, and the education of all New Zealanders in Maori and Maoritanga. The Department of Education has assisted in experimental Maori-speaking schools, and has invested in a widespread programme of teaching so that all who go through the school system will learn something of Maori and Maoritanga.

Since the late 1950s migrant flows from the South Pacific Islands of Tokelau, Samoa, Fiji, Cook Islands, Tonga and Niue have increased dramatically from 8,100 in 1956 to 92,000 or 3.4 per cent of the population in 1981. There is still freedom of movement for Tokelaus, Cook Islanders and Niueans, but the inflow from other islands has been reduced. The children of immigrants have considerable problems in their studies despite many having learnt some English prior to their arrival in NZ. This situation is most obvious in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

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There have been small inflows from China, India and other countries, since the times of the major settlements, and more recently there have been refugees from South-East Asia and Chile. These groups account for 3 per cent of the population, but although some of the groups do not use English as a domestic language, they have not hitherto affected the predominant position of English. Traditionaly the English that is used has been seen as a means of transmitting the cultural heritage. There is now a desire to temper those things that reflect British attitudes, lifestyles and language. American influence is also in evidence. These developments, along with the revival of Maoritanga, mean that the monolingual culture is slowly changing and English could conceivably in future become the lingua franca of a multilingual, multicultural society.

Externally since 1960 NZ has developed a small, but important, role in the teaching of English as a second language (TESL) as part of its foreign relations with China, South-East Asian countries and the Pacific. As the diversification of its economic relations develops, this may become more significant.

2. ENGLISH WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

English language has a position in the New Zealand education system similar to that in Britain and, as well as being the language of instruction, is examined along with other subjects in the School Certificate, University Entrance, University Scholarship and Bursary examinations. The standards do not equate precisely with GCE which are of a slightly higher level. The requirements for English at university levels are similar to those that exist in Britain and ordinary degrees are comparable to British general degrees.

Historically, NZ may have been one of the pioneers in TESL as Christian missionaries began teaching English to the Maoris in the 1840s and Bishop Selwyn produced the first English primer for Maori schools in 1843. In 1930 96.6 per cent of Maori schoolchildren still spoke Maori at home, but more recent studies have suggested that this use of Maori has declined. At school level, therefore, for 140 years there has been a problem of teaching those whose mother tongue was not English and the solutions have varied from beginning to teach in the vernacular and introducing English gradually to banning the vernacular entirely. Nevertheless, only recently has attention been given to the need for special programmes in English as a second language (ESL).

School Level

In the major cities, special units have been established for teaching English to newly arrived immigrant children of school age, but in the school system a longer-term problem has been identified which may be one of cultural adjustment as much as language difficulty. A number of schools in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and many smaller centres are endeavouring to meet the needs of these pupils in different ways: some have special withdrawal classes for TESL; others make use of TESL teachers to assist teachers of other subjects; some use volunteers from adult literacy schemes or volunteer tutors from the community to go into schools.

In a more tightly organized arrangement five district units for South-East Asian refugee pupils have been set up for a two-year period, under a national co-ordinator. Each unit has a small fund for resources and travelling, and has one seconded teacher as district resource teacher, and one or two others attached to the unit. The teachers act as advisers and protect the interests of the pupils at primary and secondary levels. Most of these teachers are trained in TESL.

Adult Level

For adults, tuition in English, lasting six weeks, has been provided at the special refugee reception centre at Mangere in Auckland for those from South-East Asia. Community colleges in places like Nelson, Wanganui and Palmerston North run evening classes in English for new settlers, and full-time and intensive classes for adults are run in the largest cities. The Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch technical institutes run part-time courses for adults learning English. Many of these students are already in employment. Home Tutor groups assist people who are unable or unwilling to go to classes, and in cases where no classes exist. One Home Tutor group is directly and totally funded by government through the Education Department; some are funded partly through government and partly through charity; others are purely voluntary and have no professional basis.

The Correspondence School

The Correspondence School Individual Programme Section runs courses for all sections of the community, from prisoners to secondary pupils. They use taped material and usually arrange a local tutor to administer and supervise the lessons sent out.

The English Language Institute

The English Language Institute at Victoria University was established in 1961 with funds provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It runs courses in English for overseas students wishing to study at NZ universities, courses in TESL for NZ teachers working overseas, and teacher training courses for those teaching ESL in NZ. It also conducts research, both independently and in collaboration with the NZ Council for Educational Research.

3. TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

The supply of trained teachers from the universities and training colleges more than meets the demand and there are now surplus teachers of English as for many other subjects. The NZ Association of Teachers of English meets annually.

TESL teacher training is carried out through the one-year academic course run by the English Language Institute at Victoria University. On one course NZ teachers and overseas teachers study TESL together, and on the second course twelve NZ teachers and teachers college tutors selected by the Department of Education attend annually on full pay. The course is orientated towards multiculturalism in the NZ context. Other TESL courses for teachers are offered by the following institutions:

i. Massey University runs extramural and correspondence courses.

ii. Teachers Colleges offer short courses in multicultural studies and include some TESL for primary teachers.

iii. The Department of Education runs occasional courses.

iv. Two Resource Centres for TESL are in operation. One, based in Auckland, is called The Pacific Islanders Educational Resource Centre and has eight full-time staff. The other Centre, based in Wellington, has a smaller staff and is known as The Wellington Multicultural Educational

Resource Centre. It is orientated towards all migrant groups. Both Centres have libraries and display TESL books which were, for a large part, donated through the British Council.

v. The Porirua English Language Team, known as PELT, is based at Windley School in Porirua and has set up a resource centre servicing the primary schools in the area. Porirua is an area of high Pacific Island and Maori settlement.

vi. There is a NZ Language Teachers Association with a TESL section.

4. MATERIALS SUPPORT

A wide range of teaching materials is available in schools and bookshops for the teaching of English at all levels.

There is only one bookshop in Auckland stocking a range of material catering for the subject of ESL. This means that people elsewehere have no means of previewing material unless they are within easy travelling distance of the Pacific Islanders Educational Resource Centre where displays are available. Tapes and films are available on loan from the National Film Library, from both Resource Centres, and from the Auckland Technical Institute. Textbooks in use come from NZ, and are currently preferred to books coming from the USA or Britain because of feeling for national identity.

The Department of Education's Curriculum Unit and School Publications Service produce regular material for use in schools. A growing number of Resource Centres for teachers, including the Pacific Islanders Educational Resource Centre and the Wellington Multicultural Educational Resource Centre, also produce their own material for sale at cost price. The Department has produced a considerable amount of material in the form of tapes for South-East Asian language groups to enable them to learn at home.

5. EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN RELATION TO ENGLISH TEACHING

The education system is based on the British system, but is centrally controlled by the Department of Education which is directly responsible for buildings, curricula, the inspectorate and levels of staffing. The Inspectorate has three inspection teams in the three secondary education regions and there are inspectors at each of the primary education boards. The Curriculum Development Unit within the Department of Education is concerned with the revision of the English curriculum and the Directorate of Pacific and Maori Education has within it an officer who has responsibility for TESL.

6. DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING OF THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Traditionally there has been a strongly egalitarian emphasis in NZ society and education in English has been seen as a means to bring about uniformity of opportunity and social justice. As a consequence, there has been a concern to make compensatory provision for disavantaged groups and hence an early development of distance education. The growth of respect for cultural difference is a recent development arising out of a growing realization of the diverse composition of NZ society. The role of English, the teaching of literature and the assessment of English in school examinations are undergoing some reappraisal in the Department of Education. This is backed up by

research taking place in the NZ Council for Educational Research (founded in 1935), on the early stages of reading, the teaching of minority languages and the teaching of creative writing in English. University Departments of English are also influential in determining the pattern of English teaching through the examination system and the training of graduates for the profession.

7. ENGLISH OUTSIDE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Commercial schools, correspondence schools and private tuition schemes exist outside the education system. They are largely concerned with teaching commerce and secretarial skills and with catering for the needs of overseas visitors.

8. BRITISH SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

The British Council has supplied material to the Department of Education, the English Language Institute, the Wellington Multicultural Educational Resource Centre, the Pacific Islanders Educational Resource Centre and to various Home Tutor organizations. The commercial production of books, films and other such material is a support. A number of teachers trained in Britain have migrated to NZ and form a source of experienced and qualified people, particularly at university level.

9. AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

The Fulbright Programme supports some teaching at university level. There is no American support or formal Anglo-American co-operation in ELT in NZ, but some of the ELT staff have been training in the USA.

10. OTHER AGENCY SUPPORT

Nil.

11. COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities exist for British publications. At present NZ publishers provide approximately one-third of the market requirement for books in English. There is a growing interest in computer-assisted learning. As yet little software has been produced for educational purposes at school level, but agreement has been reached to develop joint programmes with Australia.

There is a small market for examinations in English as a foreign language (EFL), which is largely catered for by the Cambridge First Certificate in Proficiency. A NZ examination at this level is now being developed. Large numbers of candidates are entered for Trinity College examinations in speech and drama.

Some expectations exist that it may be possible to combine the teaching of English with the development of tourist facilities for Japanese visitors, and one commercial school in Christchurch, which has a British base, has sought to exploit this potential but the numbers involved are as yet tiny.

12. CREATIVE WRITING

There are a large number of contemporary NZ writers relative to the population size some of whose work has been published overseas, e.g. Maurice Gee (OUP), Margaret Mahy (Dent/Heinemann), Janet Frame (Women's Press), and C K Stead (Collins), and a large amount of poetry is published. NZ writing is increasingly studied at school and university levels, e.g. Katherine Mansfield, Frank Sargesson, Allen Curnow, James Baxter and Bruce Mason.

There is a NZ Branch of PEN International and the NZ Literary Fund provides grants for writers. Each year government funds support a writer to go to the south of France to spend some time at Katherine Mansfield's cottage on a writer-in-residence basis. Some of the universities, e.g. Victoria and Otago, offer an annual fellowship to writers, poets and playwrights.

OUP, Penguin, Hodder & Stoughton, Allen & Unwin, Methuen, Macmillan, Mills & Boon, Heinemann and Collins are amongst the most active of British publishers with subsidiary companies based in NZ and a number of them undertake the publication of NZ books.

13. CURRENT RESEARCH

The pattern of research in English language and literature reflects a British tradition. Some research and investigation is going on in university education departments and teachers colleges, especially into problems arising in schools with Maori and Polynesian children for whom English is a second language, and also at the NZ Council for Educational Research.

University English departments pursue research in English studies. Canterbury and Victoria have an interest in sociolinguistics and Massey an interest in literature from the Commonwealth. There is a wide range of interest in other departments reflecting the special concerns of individual members of the departments. There are close links between the NZ universities and Oxford, Cambridge, Kent, Lancaster, London Istitute of Education and University College and these are maintained by some teaching exchanges and during periods of sabbatical leave.

The Hocken Library in Dunedin and the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington have large collections relating to NZ and in addition the Turnbull Library has probably the best collection of seventeenth century printed material and of editions of Milton's work in the southern hemisphere. Both libraries attract scholars from overseas and the Turnbull Library has a publications and research programme.

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15. **GENERAL STATEMENT**

The teaching of English is in general bound up with the tension between a search for a national identity and the very strong pull exerted particularly in the universities by traditional English studies. NZ has produced the current Editor of the Oxford Dictionary and scholars of international reputation in Anglo-Saxon and sixteenth- and seventeenth- century English studies. Formal academic study of NZ forms of English, of distinctive speech patterns, and of the themes that recur in NZ poetry, drama and novels has only recently developed. National identity has been seen mainly in terms of Maoritanga, and public debate has centred on its overshadowing by English culture and the under-achievement in the formal education system of those whose first language is not English. A search is now taking place for teaching techniques and forms of assessment that will encourage the continued mastery of the main international language, while making possible the recognition of distinctive forms of NZ expression within it.